

IN BRIEF**Steel company expected to produce in October**

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

local demand. Jordan's imports of iron and steel were about \$200 million in 1994. The precise component in this of iron fittings for construction was not immediately known.

According to the company officials, the Jordan Steel Company would also focus on export markets in neighbouring countries, including Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

The company has a paid-up capital of JD 16 million held by 16,000 shareholders. The company officials said no single shareholder owned more than 10 per cent of the equity.

Market analysts noted that the emergence of the company, which was set up in March 1993, comes at a time when the scope for the construction industry in Jordan as well as the Palestinian territories had increased considerably following the breakthroughs in the Middle East peace process.

Plans drawn up by the Jordanian government and expected to be implemented in the course of next few years include a large construction project.

It is also estimated that the West Bank and Gaza Strip would absorb several billion dollars in construction in the next decades or so.



AID FOR EDUCATION: The European Union (EU) and the Jordanian government Tuesday signed an agreement and to cover the cost of related consultancy services. Mr. Gazzo said that the EU will grant the Kingdom 3.9 million European currency units (ECUs) project will be undertaken by the educational facilities in Jordanian universities. Yves Gazzo, the EU representative in Amman, said that the grant was part of a 5.5 million ECUs assigned by the EU to the project for the development of education in Jordan, Yarmouk, Muta and Zarqa, in addition to the National Centre for Education and Research over the coming four years. The EU official Rima Khalaf Huneidi, said that the grant was part of a 5.5 million ECUs assigned by the EU to the project aims at improving the training courses for teachers employed at the Jordanian government to help it carry out compulsory school levels with a view to development schemes.

RSCN to attend conference on endangered animal species

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN)

pants on the measures undertaken by the RSCN to settle the Arabian oryx and other species in their natural habitat, according to the statement.

It said that the conference was expected to tackle ways to help concerned nations to increase the numbers of animals from endangered species and to review a number of cases where certain species became extinct as a result of neglect and lack of proper attention, transportation of animals from one country or place to another and lack of precautionary measures taken upon releasing the animals in their natural habitat in order to protect their lives.

The RSCN currently operates five wildlife reserves: Azraq Wetland Reserve, Shauamri Wildlife Reserve, which was established in 1975 and has 150 heads of Arabian Oryx, Wadi Mujib Reserve,

Money allocated for northern badia hospital

MAFRAQ (Petra) — Mafraq Governor Qasim Majali said

in a statement Tuesday that the Health Ministry has allocated JD 200,000 for the initial stage of a hospital to be constructed in the northern Badia district this year.

The health Ministry is still to locate the site for the hospital which will benefit the area's 90,000 inhabitants, according to Mr. Majali.

The northern Badia district accounts for 80 per cent of the total area of the Mafraq Governorate and its population accounts for 55 per cent of the governorate's inhabitants, according to the governor.

In addition to the projected hospital, he said, the Health Ministry will this year set up a comprehensive health centre at Rweished and another at Mansoura at the total cost of JD 250,000 and primary health centres at Sarhan, Baqiyat, Umm Al Sirb and Al Kum, at the cost of

JD 700,000 for the benefit of the northern Badia residents.

According to Mr. Majali, the northern Badia districts are attracting the attention of the private and public sectors, as most of the agricultural projects and most of the industries are located there.

He said that the Badia areas of the Mafraq Governorate benefit from road networks, electricity and water supplies as well as community centres, schools, post offices, civil defence and other basic services.

Mr. Majali said that the government has allocated JD 550,000 to finance construction or maintenance of schools and roads, JD 300,000 to finance projects in the Hamad basin area, which is undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and JD 1.6 million to improve the water networks in the Badia districts. These, he said, are all to be carried out during 1995.

Japan donates computers to school

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan has decided to

donate computer equipment for the Prince Hamzeh Ibn Al Hussein School, worth \$44,438, within the framework of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAPP).

The grant contract to this effect was signed between Yuji Ikeda, ambassador of Japan, and Jihan Shugum, deputy chairperson of the Administrative Committee of the Circassian Charity Society Women Branch, on Feb. 7, 1995.

The equipment, consisting of 15 units of computer system, is expected to make advanced computer education available, in accordance with the new curriculum set by the Ministry of Education.

This donation is also regarded as a contribution to the

University President

Fawzi Gharbieh said in a recent interview that the reason the university is against the amendment of the 60 per cent grade issue on purpose.

"We have been waiting for an answer from the university administration for the past two months, but so far we have not received any response," said the spokesman of the Students Union.

He accused the university administration of trying to delay the issue adding that the Students Union was promised by the committee appointed by the university that it would study the matter during the winter break, but instead,

"we were surprised that the professor in charge of the study had gone on vacation."

"When we went to discuss the matter with the university president, at the beginning of this semester, we were also surprised that he too had left the country," he added.

"It is our legal right, as a

Students Union, to distribute pamphlets, and some of the students were called to the deans office and were questioned," claimed

the spokesman.

Dr. Khrisat, however,

denied such accusations

and said that he only called two students for separate incidents. One, he said, was during the strike, when one student barged into one of the classes and forced the students to leave the lecture hall.

The other, he added, used denigrating remarks about the country, "and this happened in front of me."

Dr. Khrisat stressed that the university is seriously considering the issue and studying all its aspects.

"We hope that students will be patient enough because we need to reach a comprehensive decision that will serve all students," Dr. Khrisat said.

In the meantime, the

Students Union members insist that a strike will take

place if they do not get a "positive" answer from the university administration.

Jordan University students threaten strike over 'grade' amendment procrastination

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Students Union at the University of Jordan Tuesday announced that the students will boycott classes at the end of next week and accused the university administration of delaying the issue of a 60 per cent grade regulation.

The Students Union is demanding a change of the 60 per cent grade regulation which stipulates that students retaking courses they have failed can only attain a maximum of 60 per cent.

On Nov. 26, the Students Union staged a protest against exams regulations and on Nov. 30, after negotiations reached a deadlock between the Students Union and the university administration, about 1,000 students boycotted classes for two consecutive days.

A Students Union spokesman told reporters on Tuesday, during a press

conference held at the university premises, that the university is "delaying the 60 per cent grade issue on purpose."

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Peru, Ecuador diplomats head for Brasilia; fighting continues

LIMA (AP) — Peru and Ecuador have told their deputy foreign ministers to stay in Brazil, signaling the possibility of new talks to end a war over a swatch of dense jungle.

But there was no letup in the fighting Monday, and neither side gave any indication it was ready to relinquish its claim to disputed territory along an unmarked 48-mile section of border near the headwaters of the Cenepa River.

Peru ordered its deputy foreign minister to Brasilia, Brazil's capital, Monday after Ecuador said it was ready to resume peace talks. Ecuador's deputy foreign minister has remained in Brazil after accompanying President Sixto Duran-Ballen there as part of a three-nation tour to plead his country's case.

18 killed, 7 hurt in S. Korean ship fire

SEOUL (R) — Eighteen people were killed and seven seriously injured in a fire aboard a container vessel being repaired in a South Korean shipyard Tuesday, police said.

The 17,682-tonne ship, Hanjin Busan, caught fire in drydock in the southern port city of Pusan, a spokesman of Hanjin Shipping Co. Ltd., the ship's owners, said.

"The container vessel caught fire in its engine room and was quickly engulfed in flames," he said.

The spokesman said 16 were confirmed killed and

three were missing but a police officer later said two more bodies were found in the vessel by rescuers.

The dead were all thought to be shipyard workers, the officer said.

Police said rescue workers cut holes in the hull to aid the search for survivors because even though the fire was brought under control within three hours, toxic smoke filled the ship, preventing them from entering the engine room.

"Four points were cut out at lower parts of the ship to release the gas. Rescuers are still looking for the missing," a police officer said nearly seven hours after the fire broke out.

He said he suspected sparks from welding machines caused the fire.

Television pictures showed dark and light smoke billowing from the superstructure of the ship while firefighters directed jets of foam.

The ship was being repaired by Hanjin Heavy Industries Co. Ltd. Both Hanjin Heavy and Hanjin Shipping are member companies of the Hanjin Group, one of South Korea's top-10 business conglomerates.

Pyongyang calls Kim's birthday 'greatest holiday'

TOKYO (R) — North Korea Tuesday declared the birthday of leader Kim Jong-Il "the greatest holiday of the nation" but offered no indication of whether Kim will make a rare public appearance on that day, Feb. 16.

It also gave no clue as to when Mr. Kim, who will be 53, will formally assume control of the Stalinist state.

"It is the unanimous desire of the Korean people to significantly celebrate the birthday of Comrade Kim Jong-Il, the great leader of our party and our people," the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

It said the Central People's Committee had issued a decree designation Feb. 16 and 17 as national holidays and ordered that "all the organs, enterprises, organisations and families shall hoist the national flags of the DPRK (North Korea) on these days."

The decree is the culmination of a 20-year process of elevating the importance of Mr. Kim's birthday that parallels his grooming as heir-apparent to his father Kim Il-Sung, founder and paramount leader of North Korea until his death last July.

Analysts of the secretive Communist state said Mr. Kim's birthday was made an "extraordinary day off work" in 1975, upgraded to a "regular day off work" in 1976 finally made a "public holiday" in 1982. This was extended to include Feb. 17 in 1986, they said.

The late Kim Il-Sung sought to make his son's birthday the "greatest holiday of the nation" in 1992, but the younger Kim declined out of his "absolute loyalty and noble moral sense of duty" to his father and his "unbound modesty," KCNA said.

KCNA's announcement of the decree, in a report monitored in Tokyo, was followed by official reports that Mr. Kim's birthday was celebrated in Russia, Mozambique, Madagascar and other states.

But the state-run media gave no indication that Mr. Kim will mark next week's birthday by making a public appearance. He has been seen in public only three times since his father's death.

Pyongyang has repeatedly asserted that Mr. Kim is in control of North Korean affairs, but he has yet to assume the posts of president and chief of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea held by his father.

Burma troops continue shelling rebel camps

BANGKOK (AFP) — Burmese troops continued to shell Karen rebel bases along the border with Thailand, Burmese sources said Tuesday, while the rebels said the Rangoon junta had never seriously wanted peace.

The fighting between Rangoon troops and the rebel Karen National Union (KNU) also prompted Bangkok to repeat a warning that its forces would return fire if any shells lands on Thai soil.

One source in Chiang Mai told AFP by telephone that Burmese shelling of the Karen border stronghold of Kawmoora has been "continuous."

"There has been an increase in the shelling," he said. "It is still going on even now."

The source estimated that in recent days, as many as 1,000 shells had rained down

on Kawmoora, some 15 kilometres (nine miles) south of Manerplaw where the Moei River, which forms the border between Burma and Thailand, makes a horseshoe-shaped bend.

"But I have not heard about any ground fighting," the source said, adding that Rangoon government troops had assaulted the small but heavily fortified enclave twice in late December.

Another KNU source said Burmese troops had also been shelling the Karen outpost of Kawmawlaw.

The KNU headquarters said in a statement Tuesday it was willing to hold peace talks with the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in Rangoon, but added that it appeared the junta was not serious about wanting peace.

S. Africa can survive post-Mandela — De Klerk

SYDNEY (R) — South Africa would be severely hit if anything should happen to President Nelson Mandela but the country can also survive such a crisis, Deputy President F.W. De Klerk said Tuesday.

"If President Mandela, because of his age or illness or other reasons, suddenly vacated the position, there will be a smidgen through the international community and South Africa," Mr. De Klerk said at a business lunch in Sydney.

"But I am convinced it will not be lasting, because the ANC (Mandela's African National Congress) has a good depth of leadership," he said.

The ANC could have difficulty maintaining unity without Mr. Mandela around, however, he added.

"President Mandela is a great figure within the ANC and it might be that his successor might not keep the divergent elements inside the ANC together."

Mr. De Klerk, in Australia for a five-day visit from Monday, said extremists from both the left and right had lost support in the new South Africa.

"I think as long as we cooperate we will be able to manage the lunatics," he said.

Mr. De Klerk was South Africa's last white president before Mr. Mandela defeated him in the country's first all-race elections last April.

Last month Mr. De Klerk threatened to withdraw his National Party from the government of national unity with the ANC over differences with Mr. Mandela on apartheid-era amnesty.

Mr. De Klerk said he is now committed to remaining within the government as

long as the ANC cooperates. "I am committed to continue to do so as long as the ANC adheres to the spirit of consensus which underlies our transitional constitution. And I have recently been reassured on that score," he said.

"The government of national unity is functioning reasonably well, despite the recent problems between President Mandela and me."

South Africa is due for a major political realignment sometime within the next two to six years, Mr. De Klerk said.

"The future of politics in South Africa lies in us moving away from race. Ethnic-based parties are doomed as minority parties," he said.

"To look at South Africa in black and white terms is not to be fully realistic in South Africa."

"White is not homogeneous in South Africa, black is not homogeneous in South Africa. We have 11 official languages. Zulu is as different to Sotho or French is from German or Italian," he said.

He maintained his National Party was no longer a white-based party, but the country's most multiracial party.

"We claim to be the most non-racial party in South Africa because we have the best spread of different racial groups," he said.

"I am no longer a white leader of a white party..." he said. "I foresee the day when the National Party will have a black leader if that is the best man or woman for the job."

Mr. De Klerk's visit to Australia, and later Malaysia, over the next two weeks is aimed at promoting business ties and investment opportunities.

"Nicole Brown Simpson's sister ended two days of tearful, emotional testimony in the O.J. Simpson double murder trial Monday, sobbing uncontrollably as she told the jury of the last moments spent with her slain sister.

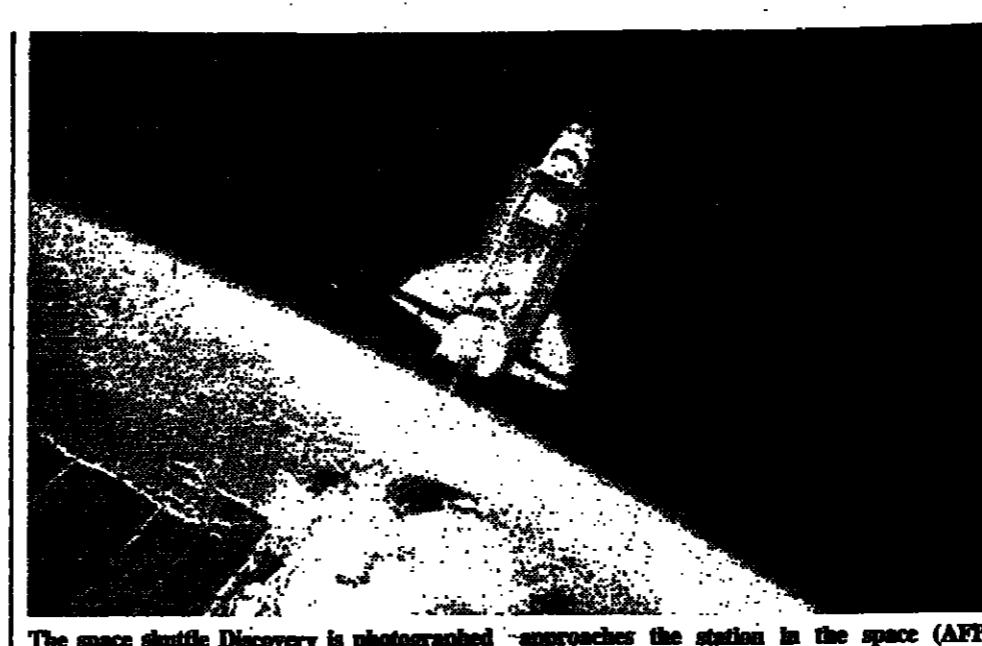
The panel also saw graphic photographs of Simpson's beaten ex-wife as her weeping sister, Denise Brown, testified the football legend humiliated Nicole Brown Simpson while she was pregnant by calling her a "fat pig."

Mrs. Brown shook with sobs as she recalled the last time she saw her sister, just hours before Nicole was stabbed and slashed to death outside her townhouse in an upscale section of Los Angeles.

Recalling the events of June 12, Ms. Brown said she joined Nicole, her sister's two children, Sydney, 8, and Justin, 5, and other members of the Brown family for dinner at the Mezzaluna Restaurant after they attended a dance recital in which Sydney appeared.

After the meal, Nicole said she was taking her children for ice cream, Ms. Brown said.

"We kissed each other



The space shuttle Discovery is photographed approaching the station in the space (AFP) from the Russian space station Mir, as it photo

Shuttle, Mir dance in orbit

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (Agencies) — The U.S. shuttle Discovery came within a mere 37 feet (11 metres)

of Russia's Mir space station Monday during the climax of an orbital rendezvous that will set the stage for a historic link-up next June.

Shuttle Commander Jim Wetherbee and veteran Cosmonaut Vladimir Titov waved from the shuttle at the cheering and laughing Mir crew as they approached the orbiting outpost.

Com. Wetherbee parked the shuttle in front of Mir at 2:20 p.m. EST (1920 GMT), and the two craft travelled in tandem at 17,500 mph (28,000 kph) from darkness into sunlight high above the northern tip of Japan.

They maintained the position for about 10 minutes, then the shuttle backed away from Mir and circled the space station at a distance of 400 feet (120 metres) while

crew members conducted a photographic survey.

"The next time we approach, we will shake your hand and together we will lead our world into the next millennium," Com. Wetherbee said.

Monday's rendezvous was the first step in a programme to merge the human space programmes of the two former cold war enemies. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) plans at least seven more shuttle missions to Mir before the United States and Russia jointly begin construction of an international space station late in 1997.

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Kyrgyzstan elections fill only 13 of 105 seats in new parliament

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan (AP)

— While voters turned out in impressive numbers for the first post-independence parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, they elected only 13 of 105 deputies, news agencies said.

The Central Asian republic will hold a second round of elections on Feb. 19 to fill the remaining 92 seats, the ITAR-TASS news agency said.

In Sunday's elections, 72.8 per cent of the 2.2 million registered voters cast their ballots, but a glut of candidates had many predicting runoff.

More than 1,000 candi-

dates from 12 parties and dozens of movements are competing for seats in the bicameral parliament, the Jorgoruk Kenesh. There are an average of 10 candidates per seat, with as many as 18 vying for some seats in the capital, Bishkek.

Among the 13 elected Sunday in the former Soviet republic were acclaimed writer Chingiz Aitmatov and two prominent former Communist Party leaders, ITAR-TASS said.

Kyrgyzstan's earlier parliament was dissolved last fall in a government crisis.

In September, 168 legislators who accused their parliamentary leaders of "intrigues" forced a suspension of parliament and the resignation of the government.

Kyrgyzstan, with a population of 4.5 million, has experienced serious problems trying to develop a market economy but still has one of the more prosperous ones in former Soviet Central Asia. Its president, Askar Akayev, has been known as the most democratic leader in the region until parliament's suspension.

Those who accused me of dictatorship and lack of democracy can see that democracy lives on in Kyrgyzstan," Mr. Akayev told the Interfax News Agency Monday.

The Central Asian republic will hold a second round of elections on Feb. 19 to fill the remaining 92 seats, the ITAR-TASS news agency said.

On Monday, Anglian Archbishop Desmond Tutu said there was not race of the money supposed to have been administered by the

Foundation for Peace and Justice (FPJ), which is already being investigated over alleged abuses of Scandinavian aid money.

"We are distressed and angry that money... set aside for child victims of apartheid cannot be accounted for immediately. We have... asked the police to investigate," Arch. Tutu said in a joint statement with Mary Burton, a fellow trustee of the Children's Trust Charity.

The charge will probably be fraud or alternatively theft through false pretences or misappropriation," police spokesman Col. Raymond Dowd told Reuters.

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Col. Dowd Said Simon, who donated the cash following his 1988 graces tour of South Africa, would be among witnesses police planned to take statements from.

Mr. Boesak could not be contacted for comment on the Simon funds.

Scandinavian aid money amounting to 7.2 million Danish crowns (\$1.16 million) to his foundation over the past two years.

Mr. Boesak was due to take up office on Feb. 1, but his appointment has been suspended until investigations into the Scandinavian funds are complete.

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Chechen fighters are helped by local residents as they pull their bus out of thick mud on a road from Urtus-Martan to Samashki. This small detachment was on its way to back up Chechen forces in the Samashki area (AFP photo)

Chechen refugees have nowhere left to run

SERNOVODSK, Russia (R) — When the Russian bombs started falling on Grozny, Zara and Zura took their children and fled into the fields. Several panicky moves later, at the outer edge of Chechnya, they have nowhere left to run.

Like the other 8,000 refugees packed into this decrepit Soviet-era mountain resort and the town of Sernovodsk down the hill, the Chechen sisters are scared the Russian helicopters circling overhead will attack them even here.

"God knows what will become of us then," Zara said, suddenly losing the stoical smile which had stayed on her small, bony face throughout a harrowing account of her family's six weeks on the road after escaping from their cellars in the capital Grozny.

"There aren't even any cellars to hide in. The place is full to bursting with refugees. If the Russians start bombing us here, it will be a bloodbath," she added somberly.

Just outside Sernovodsk, at the border with neighbouring Ingushetia, Russian Border Guards set up a checkpoint a week ago. All who left identify documents behind when they fled Grozny are turned back by troops in two armoured cars.

Most of the refugees here are women and children, crammed one family to a room, ragged laundry strung out between rickety beds. There is no heating or light, and not much food. Many of the children are sick from shock and stress.

Their men have either stayed on at home or fought or guard their houses, or they are dead.

Russian troops launched an onslaught on Grozny on Dec. 31, but in recent weeks they have turned their attention to the villages.

Chechen fighters with only light weapons have managed to keep control of parts of Grozny with a bit-and-run campaign, melting away to the villages to rest before returning refreshed and ready for battle.

Russian forces have taken

revenge on villages they believe are sheltering fighters. Early last week they attacked Samashki, 10 kilometres east of Sernovodsk, as punishment for a Chechen attack on a Russian tank convoy.

"We have no fighters here," Khizar Vitayev, head of Sernovodsk Town Council, said basely. Sernovodsk had a population of 12,000 people before the refugees started coming.

But the absence of fighters reassures nobody that their latest temporary will escape the fate of Samashki.

An anxious crowd

gathered outside one

holiday camp building

Monday to tell foreign journalists that helicopters had dropped leaflets with a printed appeal by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

It promised to rebuild the homes smashed by the Russian army if they would lay down their guns. It gave a warning, however, that Russia would bomb Sernovodsk if a single shot was fired in there.

Rumi believes the Russians are providing Sernovodsk with a few guns to provoke some hothead from here into taking a pot-shot at one of them. "That would be all the excuse they need to move in and kill us all off."

The people of Sernovodsk, who have no guns, believe this is a sign the Russians are looking for an excuse to attack them.

"I was walking down the hill two days ago when I came across a neat pile of weapons, just sitting there. There were grenades and grenade launchers and guns," said the head cook, Rumi, a non-sense woman in her 50s.

"I got two other women to help and we took them to the council building and handed them in. No one knew where they came from."

"Then, yesterday, one of the Russian helicopters landed nearby. We sent a couple of men over to see what the Russians were up to. They came back with another load of weapons, which the helicopter had left behind in another near pile."

Serbs travelled between their strongholds of Ilijza and Lukavica. Muslims and Croats drove across the U.N.-controlled airport to and from government-held Butmir and Dobrinja by bus and car. The suburbs ring the airport.

It was another step towards normality after more than 1,000 days of siege. The truce has halted fighting across most of Bosnia except for the northwest Bihać enclave, where Muslim rebels backed by Serbs from neighbouring Croatia are battling the government army.

In Washington, a senior official said the United States

French U.N. officers check together with Bosnian-Serb soldiers civilian cars leaving Sarajevo across the airport road linking the Bosnian capital with the rest of the government-held Bosnia. The so-called "blue route" was closed since last July and reopened today for the first time (AFP photo)

was breaking off contacts with the Bosnian Serbs because of their refusal to accept a peace plan worked out by the "contact group" of the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany.

"There's no point in shuttling up the hill from Sarajevo to Pale to listen to the kind of crap which was dished out by (Serb leader Radovan) Karadžić," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke said.

The talks with the Bosnian Serbs were initiated last month after mediation by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter — a development the Serbs had believed played into their hands.

Mr. Holbrooke said however Mr. Karadžić would not be invited to a French-proposed peace conference unless he changed his mind and accepted the contact group plan.

The Serbs, who control more than 70 per cent of Bosnian territory, last sum-

mer and again in January refused to agree to a division of Bosnia into two almost equal parts.

The contact group

amended its original plan, which the Muslim-led Bosnian government accepted, to give the Serbs the possibility of the confederation with Serbia they had coveted since the war began in April 1992.

France last week called for a new conference, bringing together the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia to break the deadlock.

European Union foreign ministers unanimously endorsed the idea Monday but U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was cooler.

"What the world doesn't need is another overbuilding of expectations and to have them dashed because nothing happens," he told Reuters in Washington.

In Pale, capital of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb Republic, Mr. Karadžić poured cold water over the summit idea.

"The meeting could cause no harm but the question is what will its agenda be. They cannot discuss anything on our behalf, especially not (Bosnian President Alija) Izetbegović," Mr. Karadžić told a Belgrade television station.

"The promise of confederation is hogwash. We want our sovereignty and, when we get it, then we will decide what we are going to do with it," he said.

Meanwhile a political chess game whose outcome could be wider war or new peace in old Yugoslavia is heating up as two implacable rivals prepare for talks and a rebel Serb minority debates its suddenly uncertain future.

Croatia broke a long stalemate in the game last month when it ordered 12,000 U.N. peacekeepers to leave this spring, exposing rebel Serbs whose breakaway state has taken root behind a U.N. ceasefire line since 1992.

Zagreb, countering suspicion that it is clearing the decks for war, announced last week that Foreign Minister Mate Granic will go to Belgrade soon for the first high-level talks between arch-enemies Croatia and Serbia in the Yugoslav capital.

Mr. Granic, expected to travel on Feb. 20, will seek a commitment by Serbian President Slobodan Milošević to diplomatic recognition of Croatia, which seceded from the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav Federation in 1991.

The Croatian Serb minority, which revolted over Zagreb's move to independence, would lose its claim to sovereignty if nationalist patron Milošević acknowledged Croatia within its U.N.-ratified borders.

An authoritative Serbian source said Mr. Milošević, Machiavellian master of ethnic politics in old Yugoslavia, now seemed ready to jettison at least part of the "republic of Serb Krajina" (RSK), as "unnecessary baggage."

Croatia is similarly convinced that Mr. Milošević is so keen to be rid of economically ruinous U.N. sanctions imposed for fomenting Serb expansionist wars in Croatia and Bosnia that he will strike a deal with Zagreb soon.

India's Congress Party expels Rao's rival

NEW DELHI (R) — India's ruling Congress Party Tuesday expelled former Human Resources Minister Arjun Singh, a leading rival of Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, the head of the party's Disciplinary Action Committee said.

"The committee has taken a decision to remove Arjun Singh from the primary membership of the party for about six years," K. Vijay Bhaskar Reddy told reporters after a committee meeting.

Mr. Singh was suspended from the party on Jan. 24 and later presented with a formal "charge-sheet" for alleged anti-party activities and speaking out against Mr. Rao.

On Monday Mr. Singh rejected the party's charges.

Mr. Reddy said one of the six disciplinary committee members, A. K. Antony, had wanted Mr. Singh's expulsion to be postponed for two weeks.

"But we felt, in view of the elections that are going on, we should maintain discipline in the party," Mr. Reddy said, referring to polls in six states beginning Thursday.

"It is difficult for the party to win otherwise. Unfortunately, this issue has come up after elections were announced."

Mr. Reddy told Reuters that Mr. Singh's expulsion was not required to be ratified by any other party forum. When Congress has

expelled members in the past, it has commonly removed them for six years as it did with Mr. Singh.

Meanwhile brilliant multi-coloured pennants, filled with pointed rhetoric and grandly decorated campaign vehicles are all gimmicks that usually accompany elections in India. But this time, they're missing.

As India's western state of Maharashtra prepares for assembly elections scheduled in two rounds on Feb. 9 and Feb. 12, the first of six state polls this month and the next, new rules have brought candidates down to earth with a bump.

Posters that make fanciful promises and ear-shattering loudspeakers trumpeting candidates' plans have been outlawed by new legislation which makes offenders liable to fines.

The colour and verve of previous elections have fallen victim in stringent measures introduced by the country's watchdog Election Commission in a bid to make the democratic process cleaner and less corrupt.

One initiative pushed through despite opposition was the distribution of identity cards to voters, begun in November last year but ultimately defeated by the sheer logistics involved.

The state machinery was able to photograph just 46.5 million of Maharashtra's 54 million voters, and only 31.3

million finally received their cards.

But the Election Commission has successfully arranged for video camera operators and government stenographers to attend campaign meetings and record what the candidates say, to discourage them from making appeals on the basis of caste or religion.

Yet some mavericks have managed to find loopholes in the election rules and exploit them to live up drab campaigns for an election that could be crucial for the future of the ruling Congress Party.

Syed Bukhar of the centrist Bahujan Samaj Party hired an elephant in the crowded south Bombay district of Kherwadi last week, plastered campaign posters all over it and rode it around his constituency, making speeches over a loudspeaker.

The police protested. But Mr. Bukhar was firm. "I am not defacing public or private property," he said. "Neither the elephant nor its mahout (keeper) has complained about the posters."

Election regulations banned loudspeakers on moving vehicles. Mr. Bukhar said his elephant was no vehicle. It had no engine.

He countered the idea that he had not received permission for the procession.

"I'm not leading a procession. I can't stop people following me. Besides, a procession is defined as at least five people. The elephant, the

mahout, and myself make only three."

The argument made perfect sense, legally. Stumped, the police had to book Mr. Bukhar for obstructing traffic and ill-treating an elephant by leading it down narrow lanes. He was fined 100 rupees (\$3.18).

Tightened accounting procedures for the money spent on campaigns have forced virtually every candidate to tramp from house to house, personally requesting support from voters.

"I'm exhausted and aching all over after my padayatra (foot-march)," said Jitendra Joshi, Congress candidate from the northwestern suburb of Vile Parle, "Whoever wants to go to the assembly has to work really hard."

A solitary red-and-white banner hangs limply over the entry to the central Bombay campaign office of Manohar Joshi, a popular leader of the regional Hindu Shiv Sena party.

"We've put up just six banners in the constituency," said Sandeep Shikre, a campaign worker for Mr. Joshi.

The limit on total election expenditure has been fixed at 150,000 rupees (\$4,781), enough to provide every voter in the constituency with a campaign leaflet, and no more.

Most candidates have come up against officials unsure how to interpret the new regulations.

Japan again seeks return of Russian-held islands

TOKYO (AP) — Japan Tuesday renewed demands for the early return of four northern islands held by Russia since the closing stages of World War II, as reports said the Russian foreign minister might visit next month.

"It is very desirable not only for the two countries but also for the whole international community that the territorial issue is settled on the basis of the Tokyo declaration," Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama said at a national meeting here.

The annual meeting at a Tokyo hall was sponsored by the government's Management and Coordination Agency and six organizations to mark the "Northern Terri-

tory Day."

Jiji News Agency reported that Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was likely to visit Japan early next month as part of a tour of North East Asian countries including South Korea.

A Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman said the two countries were "adjusting the schedule" but declined to confirm the timing.

Mr. Kozyrev was to visit Japan last month but postponed the trip amid growing tension surrounding the conflict in Chechnya.

Japan and Russia agreed last year on Mr. Kozyrev's visit in January as Tokyo sought a breakthrough in the

dispute over the four islands.

Jiji said the Japanese side was also hoping to use the talks with Mr. Kozyrev to pave the way for a visit to Russia by Mr. Murayama.

Japan has been demanding the return of Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorofu in the strategic Kuril chain just off its northernmost prefecture of Hokkaido, saying they were illegally occupied by the Soviet Union in the closing days of World War II.

In 1993, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and then Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa agreed in a declaration here on the need to settle the territorial issue.

Russia has said the issue should be resolved on the basis of "law and justice."

"We would like to strengthen the national campaigns for the early return of the territories," Management and Coordination Agency Director General Tsuruo Yamaguchi said at the meeting here Tuesday.

Some 1,500 representatives from across Japan attended the meeting, which adopted an appeal for local assemblies to adopt resolutions for the return of the disputed islands.

Because of the dispute, Japan and Russia have yet to sign a peace treaty to formally end hostilities during World War II.

In the grip of 'Possession'

How do ideas take shape in an artist's mind? Why are some thoughts nurtured and others cast aside? Here,

A S Byatt looks back on the long gestation of her Booker Prize-winning novel, Possession

THE BEGINNING of Possession, and the first choice was, most unusually for me, the title. I thought of it in the British Library, watching that great Coleridge scholar Kathleen Coburn circumambulating the catalogue. I thought: "She has given all her life to his thoughts," and then I thought: "She has mediated his thoughts to me." And then I thought: "Does he possess her, or does she possess him? There could be a novel called Possession about the relations between living and dead minds." This must have been in the late sixties. It was the time of the *nouveau roman*, of the novel as "text."

When I first recognise a thought as the germ of a story, I form a shape, or file, in a corner of my mind, to which I add things that seem to belong to it — quotations, observations. At that stage this Gestalt is more like the plan for a painting than a novel. It has colour and texture, though I have to think hard to call these to mind. The *un Gestalt* of Possession was a grey cloudy web to do with the ghostliness and connectedness of the original idea. I think it was also to do with the *nouveau roman*, which I still visualise in that form. I imagined my text as a web of scholarly quotations and parades through which the poems and writings of the dead should loom at the reader, to be summarised and guessed at.

The next decisive choices came in the 1980s when I was teaching Browning and George Eliot, and also lecturing on Henry James and his father, Henry James senior, a leading Swinburnian. I had had the idea that the word possession involved both the daemonic and the economic. Reading the Browning letters made me see that "possession" had a primary sexual connotation, too. I made a decision: there should be two couples, man and woman, one alive and one dead. The novel would concern the relations between these two pairs.

My grey cobweb by palimpsest changed colour.

It took on a lurid black, shot with crimson and scarlet, colours of passion. I was teaching that great novel, *The Bostonians*, with its world of witches, wizards, mediums, and spirit-rappers and roaring radicals¹ to a generation of students involved in the politics of gender, who disliked James's tragicomic treatment of lesbian passion. It occurred to me that in the world of 19th-century spiritualism and feminism, possession had both its meanings at once.

So there was a need for the 19th-century woman to be a lesbian, or to be thought to be a lesbian, and the 20th-century woman scholar to be a feminist. What George Eliot's letters added to this texture of texts was the sense I always have that her real passionate self is splendidly absent from the letters kept by the people who kept them.

Her love-letters, unlike those of the Brownsings, were buried with her. It is the lack of an unusually devoted marriage between poets once separated that we have the Browning letters. There have been serious proposals to dig up George Eliot. There is a gothic plot, I thought, of violence and skullduggery. The Gestalt got more lurid, purple, black, vermillion, with flying white forms.

I half-knew that the form of my novel should be a parody of every possible form, popular and "high culture", when I was asked to review Umberto Eco's *Reflections on the Name of the Rose*, which combines medieval theology, church history, gleefully bloodthirsty horrors, reflections on the form of the novel, with a hero who is an avatar or precursor of Sherlock Holmes. What entranced me about Eco's *Reflections* was his pleasure ("I wanted to murder a monk") and his technical reflections on the fact that detective stories and melodramas had to be written backwards. If you want to burn down a library quickly and irretrievably, you must make it burnable when you invent its architecture.

There was a huge problem. I knew modern forms were parodic — not only Eco but the criticism of Malcolm Bradbury had been pointing that out — parodic not in a sneering or mocking way, but as "rewriting" or "representing" the past. The structural necessity of my new form was that the poems of my two poets, the most important thing about them in my own view, should be in this no-longer ghostly text. And I am not a poet, and novelists who write poems usually come to grief. Robertson Davies, the Canadian novelist, had written a

novel with a parodic libretto made up of the poems of Thomas Lovell Beddoes. I said to the poet DJ Enright I was contemplating using the early poems of Pound that look as though they could be by Browning. "Nonsense," he said. "Write your own."

So I tried. My mind has been full since childhood of the rhythms of Tennyson and Browning, Rossetti and Keats. I read and reread Emily Dickinson, whose harsher and more sceptical voice I found more exciting than Christina Rossetti's meekness. I wanted a fierce female voice. And I found I was possessed — it was actually quite frightening. The 19th-century poems that were not 19th-century poems wrote themselves. They fitted into the metaphorical structure of my novel, but were not mine, as my prose is mine.

There is one further late choice I should like to mention. There are three passages in the 19th-century narrative which are recounted by a Victorian "omniscient" third-person narrator. These three include the epilogue, and tell what might be thought of as the most important, beautiful and terrible moments in the lives of the Victorian characters.

I added things; it should be an epistolary novel, which meant writing letters the scholars should find; it should contain early narrative forms (Victorian women writers wrote fairy-tales) and late ones (bits of biographies and critical "accounts" of what was going on). The Gestalt in my mind changed colour and form and became delicious, green and gold, the colours of Tennyson illustrations in my mind as a child, of dream landscapes, of childhood imaginings of a world brighter, more jewel-like than this one.

I still receive angry letters from time to time from all over the world, saying these passages are a mistake.

That I have cleverly told the story of the past through documents, diaries, letters and poems, and that I am breaking my own convention incompetently. But my decision was very deliberate.

It was partly polemical, for two reasons. I do believe that biographies are a kind of shadow-play, and that what really mattered is likely to elude the piecemeal together of lives. (Doris Lessing endorses this view, mischievously, at the start of her autobiography.)

I also believe that the third-person narrator has been much maligned in the recent past: it does not pretend to "God" — simply to the narrative voice, which knows what it does know.



A STUDY IN GREEN AND GOLD AND BLUE: The Beguiling of Merlin (1870) by Sir Edward Burne-Jones

And I wanted to show that such a voice can bring the reader nearer the passions and the thoughts of characters, without any obligation to admire the cleverness of the novelist. There is a nice irony about this — the writer and reader share what critics and scholars can't discover.

And the Gestalt now? A green and gold and blue balloon, far away, untouched

able. A writer can't think about novels that have gone away. The Gestalt of the one I am writing, about the 1960s, is a jagged harlequin pattern of coloured fragments and smoking bonfires. And there is something weak about the narrative line, or tension, connecting these, that I'm trying to deal with.

The Independent

Majority of Jordanians favour unity

(Continued from page 1)

ers in the opinion leader sample. The camp sample was the least to agree on this conclusion with only 19.7 per cent reporting it.

For example, 66 per cent of East Bank opinion leaders said that an obstacle to national unity is the "dual loyalty among Jordanians of Palestinian origin," while 40.9 per cent of West Bankers agreed with them.

In the national sample, 35.4 per cent of Jordanians of East Bank origin acknowledged this factor compared to 24.7 per cent among West Bankers and 22.2 per cent among refugee camp residents.

"Concerning the West Bankers' belief that the concentration of sensitive government jobs among East Bankers is a polarisation factor, 74.1 per cent of West Bankers in the opinion leader sample agreed with this analysis compared to 43.9 per cent among East Bankers in the same sample; 33.3 per cent of East Bankers in the opinion leader sample.

The poll shows that the percentage of those who did not want improved ties was higher among East Bankers than in the national sample, though the percentage was low, reaching only 31.4 per cent in the national sample and 12.6 per cent in the opinion leader sample.

Among West Bankers, 19.5 per cent in the national sample did not want improved relations nor did 8.9 per cent among opinion leaders.

The poll said that the majority of the people surveyed in the national sample, 74.4 per cent in the opinion leader sample and 20.1 per cent in the camp sample said the relationship between the Kingdom and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) should "show good will, coordinate with the government and pursue unity" with Jordan in order to improve its ties with the Kingdom.

The majority of the people surveyed said the Kingdom should "show good will (towards the PLO), seek coordination with the PLO and support it" in order to have better PLO-Jordan ties.

The poll shows that the majority of the persons said that it is the PLO and not Jordan which should take

those measures to improve the relations between the two sides.

The poll said there is a dominant belief that the agreements the PLO has reached with Israel will have more positive than negative effects on Jordan. But it said the opinion leaders "were more convinced of the negative effects than those in the national sample."

The negative effect, said the poll, will be on the economic field and on Jordan's negotiating position with Israel, while the positive impact will be in enabling the Kingdom to proceed with these negotiations as a result of the environment "of security and stability which will prevail."

The poll reported limited optimism that the Palestinian-Israeli talks will result in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

The percentage of those who believed the negotiations will lead to the creation of an independent state ranged between 16.1 per cent in the camp sample to 19 per cent in the national sample and 16.2 per cent in the opinion leader sample.

This view was expressed by 18.1 per cent of East Bankers and 20 per cent of West Bankers in the national category, compared to 17 per cent among East Bankers and 15.4 per cent among West Bankers in the opinion leader sample.

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those measures to improve the relations between the two sides.

Informed sources said the centre, which is the first academic institution to study the political situation in the Kingdom and provide data

on it, is planning to bring together a group of individuals "who have contributed to the debate about Jordanian-Palestinian relations" in an effort to further study the relations between East and West Bankers in the Kingdom.

Brown: U.S. is committed

(Continued from page 12)

Palestinian delegate to the talks Nabil Shaath told Reuters. He said the Palestinians would also seek direct trade access with Jordan and Egypt to reduce dependence on Israel.

The two-day meeting, in the Red Sea resort of Taba and headed by Mr. Brown, aims to boost trade between Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians and Israel.

The Commerce Department in Washington said the aim of Mr. Brown's current Middle East tour was to promote trade and investment.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation in the theory that Middle East peace should go hand in hand with economic development within a free market.

Dr. Shaath said U.S. and Israeli calls for an end to Arab economic boycott of Israel "must be corrected to ask for the end of Israeli boycott and closure of the Palestinian territory."

Envoy leaves for Riyadh today

(Continued from page 1)

their former employees in Kuwait with a view to sounding out whether they were interested in renewing their contracts.

In the meantime, many Jordanians who were forced to return home in the wake of the Gulf crisis say that they were contacted by

PNA police arrest dozens

(Continued from page 1)

ance Movement Hamas and Islamic Jihad men, the officials said.

All three groups oppose the Israeli-PLO peace deal. "We have already taken major steps last night, yesterday, two days ago and we will continue. We will not permit these groups to harm, not only the Israelis, but also the Palestinians and the peace process," Mr. Arafat told reporters.

"We will continue in our way to deal and to face all these fanatic and extremist forces and we will not allow them to continue in these activities. But I haven't a magic stick. But I do my best," he said.

Nihad Abul Ghosh, a leading DFLP member, said the arrest sweep began at dawn when police rounded up 35 activists out of 70 they were looking for. Police picked up 10 more at the DFLP office in Gaza City around noon and took them by bus to jail.

Mr. Abul Ghosh said many DFLP activists have gone into hiding.

Arabs, Israel, U.S. open talks

(Continued from page 1)

Taba talks as representative of the world's biggest economy and a firm believer in the theory that Middle East peace should go hand in hand with economic development within a free market.

The Jordanian delegation is headed by Minister of Trade and Industry Ali Abu Ragheb.

In a statement following a preparatory meeting Tuesday, Mr. Abu Ragheb said Jordan's participation in the meeting "reflects its keen interest in activating the peace process in the region and ensuring regional development." Mr. Abu Ragheb stressed the need to provide the means capable of improving living conditions.

He voiced hope that the meeting would come up with resolutions and proposals set to ensure regional development, which is a basic foundation for just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

The formal session was to

begin on Wednesday. Secretary General of Ministry of Industry and Trade Mohammad Smadi said: "We have come with a lot of goodwill because we believe that the people of the Middle East must rapidly see the concrete effects of peace in their daily lives."

The Jordanian delegation had brought plans for a major road project, but would not reveal details, agencies reported.

Israeli Trade Minister Michael Harish said that the meeting was a "logical follow-up to the 60-nation Middle East economic summit in Casablanca last November."

The Palestinian delegation chief, Planning and Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath, said they hoped to negotiate a free trade with the United States (see page 12).

The Egyptian delegation was led by Trade Minister Mahmoud Mahmoud and included industrial chiefs.

Economy

GCC oil earnings stabilise since Gulf war

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf oil earnings have been more stable since the end of the 1991 war against Iraq because of less price fluctuation and fewer quota violations, official Gulf figures show.

The revenues of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have ranged between \$66 billion and \$77 billion a year since 1991 compared with a much larger gap during the 1980s, according to the figures.

They stood at \$70 billion in 1994 compared with \$74.2 billion in 1993, \$77 billion in 1992 and \$66.4 billion in 1991.

The figures were compiled from recent reports of the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) planning ministry and central bank, the Saudi Monetary Agency and other official sources in the

region.

The relative stability in earnings contrasts with sharp fluctuations during the 1980s. Revenues topped \$180 billion in 1981 before they plummeted to around \$45 billion in 1985 and as low as \$34.2 billion in 1986.

They stood at \$46.8 billion in 1987, \$43.6 billion in 1988 and \$52 billion in 1989. In 1990, they jumped to \$71 billion as prices shot to nearly \$40 just after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and some member states hiked output to make up for a loss of around four million barrels per day (b/d) due to a halt in Iraqi and Kuwaiti crude exports.

"The period after the Gulf war is quite different from that before the war," a Gulf-based oil executive said. "Prices were sharply changing before the war because several OPEC producers

were exceeding their output quotas while now most of them have no room for violation as they are producing near capacity."

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, is the only member of the 12-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with a large extra output capacity. At the end of 1994, capacity stood at around 9.5 million b/d compared with the kingdom's OPEC quota of eight million b/d.

Apart from prices, production by GCC states was also unstable. From a record 12 million b/d in 1980, Saudi output plunged to around five million b/d six years later before it boosted production to eight million b/d in 1990 to reverse the sharp rise in crude prices after the invasion of Kuwait.

The UAE produced an average one million b/d in the early 1980s as it was a relatively newcomer to the oil scene. New major discoveries and capacity expansions enabled it to raise production to 1.5 million b/d in the mid-1980s and around 2.16 million b/d currently.

The six GCC members, sitting atop 45 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves, were behind OPEC's recent policy of fixing its official output ceiling for a whole year to guarantee stability in the market.

"With such a new policy, Gulf states expect oil prices to stabilise at their current prices or slightly higher in the next few years barring unexpected developments," said a source close to the GCC oil industry. "This, in turn will help stabilise their budgets as it will be less difficult for them to calculate their oil earnings."

TURKEY TO BENEFIT FROM EU CUSTOMS UNION — ANALYSTS

ISTANBUL (R) — Pending customs union with the European Union (EU), back on track after months of doubt, will fortify Turkey's sagging economy and could accelerate needed social reform, economic analysts said Tuesday.

In the long-run this will help the Turkish economy by making everyone more competitive and in the short-run this will be very good for certain sectors," said a London-based fund manager with holdings in Turkey.

The deal, which will lift trade barriers between Turkey and the Union is expected to be approved next month, EU ministers said in Brussels Monday.

The plan was put in doubt last December when Greece vetoed the deal, but Athens was apparently pacified with a promise talks would start after 1996 on allowing Cyprus — a third of which is occupied by Turkish troops — into the union.

The EU is Turkey's biggest trading partner, accounting for roughly 45 per cent of imports and exports, and Turkish industry hopes the new deal will give it better access to the 350 million people in the union.

"The union will also be a benefit for EU companies, which will have high growth potential in the low-saturated Turkish market," said Enver Gonen, secretary general of the Economic Development Fund in Istanbul.

Elsewhere in the budget, Mr. Clinton calls for 1,000 new border patrol agents to deal with politically delicate illegal immigration. To cover costs, he proposes a new \$3 per car and \$1.50 per individual crossing fee at U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada.

The White House is asking Congress to approve \$246 billion for the U.S. Department of Defense in the next fiscal year.

— \$545 million for interna-

tional peacekeeping, — \$240 million for measures against terrorism, illegal narcotics and crime.

— \$170 million to work against nuclear proliferation.

Analysts said the customs union would give a sure boost to those Turkish industries reliant on domestic raw materials and low-cost labour.

The textiles, glass and ceramics industries — already strong exporters — are expected to do even better with the fall of barriers.

"We are a strong industry and we are already competitive, so we have always been the strongest supporters of the customs union," said Emin Acilan, an official with the Union of Textile Exporters.

But consumer durables and cars may be hit hard by the lifting of tariffs, which have protected such sectors from competition.

"You won't see a total collapse of these companies, but it's going to make it a lot cheaper (than it is now) to buy a BMW or a German refrigerator," said the London-based analyst.

The union, which if approved would take effect at the start of 1996, could also speed overhaul of Turkey's troubled economy by forcing companies to trim waste and encouraging investment to boost competitiveness.

Local companies, no longer protected by high tariffs, will have to streamline in order to compete. Exporters, freed from quotas, will be able to expand as much as the market can bear.

As important as the economic gains, analysts said, the expected customs union should give a needed boost to Turkey's social transformation.

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OPEC benefits little from oil demand surge

LONDON (R) — The world's seemingly unquenchable thirst for oil will continue in 1995 but OPEC members are unlikely as alternative suppliers continue to snatch the lion's share of this growth in demand,

A breakdown showed the oil income has nearly stabilised in each GCC member, except Kuwait whose energy sector was damaged by the Iraqi invasion.

Saudi Arabia's income stood at around \$47 billion in 1994 compared with \$43.5 billion in 1993, \$47.5 billion in 1992 and \$43.6 billion in 1991.

The UAE's revenues were estimated at nearly \$12.2 billion in 1994, at \$12.5 billion in 1993, and at \$14.4 billion in 1991. Oman and Qatar incomes ranged between \$4 billion and \$5 billion and between \$2 billion and \$3 billion respectively.

Global oil demand is expected to surge by one million barrels per day (b/d) this year, matching the steep growth in 1994, the International Energy Agency (IEA)

said Tuesday.

But while OPEC is expected to hold its production at 24.52 million b/d until the end of the year as agreed last November, non-OPEC supplies are forecast to climb by 700-800,000 b/d, diminishing OPEC's role in balancing world oil supplies.

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**Business
Daily
Beat**

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Violators of labour law pay JD1m in fines

★★ The inspection directorate at the Ministry of Labour has fined 20,338 institutions JD 1,058,928 for labour violations last year. The directorate supervises 86,211 institutions employing 276,512 Jordanians and 106,503 non-Jordanians. The directorate received 2,541 labour complaints last year and managed to solve 2,092 cases amicably (Al Dustour).

★★ The Ministry of Health is expected to float tenders for contracts estimated to cost JD5.5 million this year. The tenders will be to expand or set up various hospitals throughout the Kingdom (Al Ra'i).

★★ The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has started implementing the first of two projects to provide 41,000 telephone lines to Zarqa governorate by 1997 at a cost of JD 25.5 million. The first project, costing JD 17 million, will provide 20,000 telephone lines to northern Zarqa (Zarqa Al Jadidah) Awajan, Al Azraq, Al Suknah, Al Hallabat, Al Masarah and Al Omari. The second project, which has not started yet, will provide 21,000 telephone lines at a cost of JD 8.5 million to residents of Russeifeh and Musherfeh. There are 31,384 telephone lines in Zarqa, of which 1,458 are open for subscription (Al Ra'i).

★★ A new public shareholding company, Al Iqbal Company for Printing and Packing, is offering two million shares (worth JD2 million) for public subscription. The company, which was registered at the Ministry of Industry and Trade on Dec. 27, 1994, has a total capital of JD8 million and aims at setting up and operating a commercial printing press and packing plant. Key founders of the company who paid JD6 million of the capital are: The Bank of Jordan (JD 400,000); Tawfiq Fakhraoui, chairman of the bank (JD 400,000); Al Saeed Company for Trade and Development (JD 400,000) and the International Cigarettes and Tobacco Company (JD 200,000); Dr. Ashraf Al Kurdi (JD 150,000) and Mr. Samir Theeb Anis Isa (JD 150,000) (Al Ra'i).

★★ According to an agreement signed recently with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, the U.S. company Ecology Environment will be carrying out a feasibility study for developing the Jordan Valley. The U.S. company was chosen from among five international firms at the recommendation of the Ministry of Planning after it won the highest points (Al Dustour).

★★ A committee from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Planning, the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation, the Amman Chamber of Industry and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce is studying the possibility of establishing a permanent international fair in Amman similar to those in Syria and Egypt. A decision has not yet been taken on whether to expand the current grounds of the Amman International Fair or to set up a new one. The preliminary cost of a new one is estimated at JD 15 million. At present the Amman International fair has only 5,000 square metres whereas the land around it is 466,000 square metres in area (Al Dustour).

★★ Obtaining a telephone line in the Abdali area of Amman will not be a problem within the coming three months as more than 12,000 new telephone lines will be available to the exchange (Al Dustour).

U.S. seeks to boost exports to Arab Gulf states

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AFP) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown will visit the Gulf Wednesday to discuss reviving flagging U.S. exports to the lucrative market and seek more business opportunities.

After visiting Israel and Jordan, Mr. Brown will arrive Wednesday in Kuwait, where U.S. companies are seeking opportunities in the

fields of telecommunications, housing and electricity, a U.S. official in the emirate said.

The commerce secretary, who is to visit Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Thursday, is accompanied by the heads of 10 key U.S. firms which are either already doing business in the region or eyeing new contracts.

They include Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), which won a deal in December to build a shipyard in the UAE.

"NNS is currently marketing a state-of-the-art frigate to several countries in the Middle East and is among the final competitors to build up to six frigates for the UAE, a project that could be worth more than \$1 billion," a U.S. embassy statement said.

Another firm is Oshkosh Truck Corporation, which has made considerable investments in marketing in the UAE, Kuwait and Egypt.

Oshkosh estimated sales potential in the UAE at around \$300 million and said it would seek large sales of heavy duty tactical trucks in the UAE and Kuwait during Mr. Brown's visit, according to the U.S. embassy in Abu Dhabi.

Oshkosh also hopes to look into substantial opportunities for commercial airport rescue and fire fighting vehicles.

of Japan's efforts to globalise the unit.

"It is unrealistic to think of Asia as being a yen economic zone," IBJ said, warning that Japanese companies moving production to the region would have to take further measures to minimise foreign exchange risks.

The study argued that because of its isolation, the stability of the yen was becoming a matter of concern only for Japan.

"Concerted actions to halt the yen's appreciation are less likely to be on the agenda of Group of Seven summit meetings," the bank said.

On the other hand, the Japanese unit's isolation has also made the currency less susceptible to turmoil in international financial markets, the study said, noting that the Mexican peso's recent plunge had little impact on the yen.

cles, construction and defence trucks," the embassy said.

Mr. Brown's delegation includes Bruce Coles, president of Stone and Webster Inc. which is seeking construction opportunities in the region.

U.S. embassy officials said the company was bidding for projects in the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar. They said the projects, involving gas and refinery expansions, would be awarded this year.

A company statement said the mission would provide an opportunity to talk with policy and decision makers "to demonstrate Stone and Webster's interest and commitment to the countries and clients being visited."

The statement gave no details of the projects but, for doubling the output capacity of its key oil refinery at Ruweis from around 130,000 barrels per day. It also plans to set up a domestic gas-network in the Gulf nation is gradually

switching from oil to gas, a cleaner source of energy.

Qatar has also embarked on one of the biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in the world to tap its giant North gas field. The U.S. company Mobil is involved in one of the projects that will eventually produce more than 10 million tonnes per year.

Another company, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, one of the biggest oil firms in the world, has also set its eyes on the region's energy industry.

The U.S. embassy quoted the company as saying it hoped during this visit to encourage foreign governments to offer opportunities for oil and gas exploration and enhanced oil recovery projects.

Embassy officials said Mr. Brown would also hold talks on bolstering commercial links when he arrives for his first visit to the UAE Thursday.

Raw material prices find a fragile floor after fund exodus

LONDON (R) — Bargain hunting restored a fragile stability to shocked world commodity markets Tuesday after a sell-off by speculators and investment funds.

But expert opinion was divided on whether the past 15 months' inflationary "bull run" in raw materials might resume.

Tokai Bank Europe, however, argues that it would need a sustained economic slowdown to stop commodities going up by perhaps 25 per cent more this year.

"One trigger for the sell-off seems to have been U.S. data on Friday showing a rise in unemployment, seen as an indicator that the economy may be slowing and that bonds are set to rally."

London Metal Exchange money that had earlier fuelled the commodity boom sent prices tumbling Monday on everything from copper through sugar to crude oil.

One view is that supply and demand are still in a tight enough balance to support a gradual return to stronger prices, particularly in the key base-metals sector.

Selling there was taken the flagship copper, down by almost 10 per cent from a 5½-year high hit in mid-January.

"Yesterday was black Monday for base-metal prices," said brokerage Macquarie Equities.

But it adds that consumer buying of the kind that helped prices Tuesday is likely to stabilise markets "after the current surge of fund selling dissipates."

A contrary view is that supply/demand fundamentals will not alone buoy up commodities if the fund managers just decide — as some did this week — that revived bond and equity markets are now a better place to put their money.

"It will be a difficult thing to repair the damage," said Cliff Green of Trend Analysis.

Economists say that higher interest rates now in place in

the United States and elsewhere may already be braking the economic rebound that has fired up raw-material demand.

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London Metal Exchange copper traded Tuesday just above \$2,825 per tonne, that was up from a 1995 low of \$2,780 on Monday but still far below the mid-January high at \$3,081.

Aluminium was assisted Tuesday by news of another big draw of 13,925 tonnes on London warehouse stocks. It traded a \$10 or so above Monday's close of \$2,050.

Gold was steady just above \$375 per ounce. Benchmark Brent crude oil stood easier by some 25 cents from the start of the week to be discussed around \$17.10 per barrel.

Coffee, cocoa and sugar were steady in early London trading after sharp New York-led falls Monday.

Kuwait banks said to regain dinar/foreign exchange role

KUWAIT (R) — Three Kuwaiti banks and a branch of a Bahrain-based bank have won permission to trade the Kuwaiti dinar on foreign exchanges for their own account for the first time since the 1991 Gulf war, banking sources said Monday.

They said National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Gulf Bank, Burgan Bank and the local branch of Bahrain-based Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK) received central bank

authorisation in late 1994. The 50-trading added that NBK and Gulf, the emirate's two biggest commercial banks, have also received central bank permission to trade interest rate derivatives for their own account for the first time since the Gulf crisis.

The reforms are part of a central bank plan to strengthen the profitability and competitiveness of a banking system slowly recovering from war losses and long-standing debt problems.

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST	
COMPANY'S NAME	FOR TUESDAY 07/02/1995
NO. OF SHARES TRADED	INDEX NUMBER: 157.00 CHANGE : -0.38%
NO. OF SHARES TRADED	INDEX NUMBER: 128.55 CHANGE : -0.28%
NO. OF SHARES TRADED	INDEX NUMBER: 128.00 CHANGE : -0.81%
NO. OF SHARES TRADED	INDEX NUMBER: 157.00 CHANGE : -0.38%
NO. OF SHARES TRADED	INDEX NUMBER: 128.55 CHANGE : -0.28%
NO. OF SHARES TRADED	INDEX NUMBER: 128.00 CHANGE : -0.81%
NO. OF SHARES TRADED	INDEX NUMBER: 122.36 CHANGE : -0.46%
NO. OF SHARES TRADED	INDEX NUMBER: 140.62 CHANGE : -0.45%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 153358	VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET : 156857

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LONDON EXCHANGE RATES	
LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.	
U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3972/82
	1.5224/34
	1.7174/84
	1.2974/84
	31.51/55
	5.3020/70
	1612.03/0
	99.24/34
	7.4325/25
	6.7010/60
	6.0273/23
One sterling	\$1.5570/80
One ounce of gold	\$375.10/375.60



Spanish tennis star Arantxa Sanchez Vicario during her tennis training session on Monday (AFP photo)

Sanchez-Vicario becomes No. 1

S. PETERSBURG (Agencies) — Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain replaced Germany's Steffi Graf on Monday as the top ranked women's tennis player in the world.

Sanchez assumed the number one ranking for the first time in her career when the ailing Graf lost points for failing to defend her title to Tokyo last week. Sanchez has 307,913 points and Graf has 289,196.

Graf, who has not played this year due to a calf injury, also lost all her points for failing to defend her title at the Australian Open the previous week.

Sanchez reached the final of the Australian Open where she was defeated by Mary Pierce.

The calf injury is the latest in a series of setbacks for Graf.

Graf suffered a back injury during the Canadian Open in August. She managed to make the finals of the U.S. Open but lost to Sanchez-Vicario in three sets when her back injury flared up again.

Graf tried to return for the season-ending Virginia Slims champions in New York but lost to Pierce in her second match.

That loss capped Graf's least productive season in recent years. The Australian Open was her only Grand Slam victory of the year. She lost to Pierce at the French Open, was upset in the opening round at Wimbledon by Lori McNeil and was beaten by Sanchez in the finals at the U.S.

Open.
Graf to make Paris comeback

Steffi Graf will have a special point to prove when she returns from injury to competition for the first time this year as top seed at next week's \$430,000 women's indoor Paris Open.

Dethroned as world number one by Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in this week's rankings, Graf will be eager to reassert her authority after missing the season's opening events because of a nagging back injury.

And she will be seeded to meet her arch-rival, Mary Pierce, in the final. Pierce will be making her first appearance in front of home fans since her triumph at the Australian Open.

Leading women's rankings	
1.	Arantxa Sanchez Vicario (Spain)
2.	Steffi Graf (Germany)
3.	Mary Pierce (France)
4.	Conchita Martinez (Spain)
5.	Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)
6.	Lindsey Davenport (U.S.)
7.	Gabriela Sabatini (Argentina)
8.	Natalina Zvereva (Belarus)
9.	Kimiko Date (Japan)
10.	Anke Huber (Germany)
11.	Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria)
12.	Iva Majoli (Croatia)
13.	Breanda Schultz (Netherlands)
14.	Nanako Sawamoto (Japan)
15.	Amy Frazier (U.S.)
16.	Sabine Hack (Germany)
17.	Lori McNeil (U.S.)
18.	Julie Haldor (France)
19.	Mary Joe Fernandez (U.S.)
20.	Amanda Coetzer (South Africa).

Lone Atlantic swimmer nears land

PARIS (AFP) — Guy Delage the 42-year-old Frenchman trying to swim alone across the Atlantic, has nearly reached the West Indian island of Barbados after 53 days in the water.

He is expected to sight land on Wednesday and to reach the shore either on Thursday or Friday after swimming or drifting aboard his raft for almost 3,900 kilometres.

Since setting out on December 16 from Cape Verde off West Africa, Delage has swum for an average of seven hours a day. The rest of the time, he has spent aboard his hi-tech raft where he can sleep, cook and communicate via the telephone and a fax machine.

It took Delage several days to get his body acclimated to life in the ocean and half way across he said he had lost eight to 10 kilograms in weight despite having stocked up with extra fat before setting out.

Milan want fans on best behaviour for Arsenal match

MILAN (Agencies) — AC Milan are demanding exemplary behaviour from their followers when they host England's Arsenal in the European Super Cup second leg Wednesday.

The match is the first staged in Italy since a young Genoa supporter was stabbed to death before a game against European champions Milan on January 29. Simone Barbaglia, an 18-year-old Milan fan, has been charged with murder.

But English crowd control has since won the respect of many Italians and the press warmly praised the atmosphere during the first leg at Highbury last Wednesday.

Arsenal came to Italy to play Torino on their way to lifting the European Cup Winners' Cup last season and there were no reports of trouble. Their victory over Italy's Parma in the final in Copenhagen was equally free of fan violence.

Milan seek to claim the Super Cup — the annual meeting between the European champions and Cup Winners' Cup holders — for the third time after taking the 1989 and 1990 editions.

They start as favourites after the 0-0 draw in London but will seek to avoid a repetition of last year when they lost 2-0 to Parma at the San Siro after winning the

Nagano determined to host Winter Olympics

NAGANO (AFP) — Nagano, where the Winter Olympics will be held in exactly three years, has sought to reassure international sports leaders that the Kobe earthquake, or other tremors, will not affect the games.

The city leaders are trying to remain as calm as possible while the rest of the country is in a state of near panic over the devastation in Kobe and who will pay the bill to rebuild the city.

"Everything is going well as planned," Nagano Mayor Tasuku Tsukada told AFP. "As Nagano is far from the damaged areas, there is no problem about holding the Olympic Games here."

Two days after the killer quake, Tsukada courteously turned down one offer from

Salt Lake City in the United States to take over the 1998 Games.

But German sports leaders have also made a request for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to make sure Nagano is not at risk from any new quake. The IOC itself is concerned that rebuilding Kobe may divert funds from the Winter Games showcase, according to international sporting officials.

Nagano, the second Japanese city to host the Winter Olympics, is expected to welcome 1.5 million visitors and 3,000 athletes and officials from around 70 countries for 16 days starting February 7, 1998.

"The sheer numbers involved is what worries us,"

said one international Olympic official.

But Tsukada, outwardly, shrugs off the fuss. "As you see, out there, the construction of facilities and transport is going smoothly," he said.

The central Japanese city is 350 kilometres northeast of Kobe, where more than 5,200 people were killed and more than 110,000 buildings destroyed or damaged.

No matter what was reported in the world press, Nagano was not affected by the quake.

About 30 per cent of the new facilities and bullet-train lines to be built for the Games are ready. The 150 billion yen (\$1.5 billion) worth of construction should be ready by the end of 1997.

However, there are some

question marks about Nagano's readiness. According to city officials, no food is kept in reserve for emergencies. There are only 200 blankets kept for 354,000 residents in case of a disaster.

And, like Kobe, the local government has no emergency plans to bring in troops in case such earthquakes.

City officials said it planned to complete the review by the end of 1995, but no details were available yet.

"There is no doubt that another quake like the one in Kobe will hit somewhere in Japan," said Yoshimitsu Okada, chief researcher of the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention.

About 10 percent of earthquakes in the world occur in Japan or its vicinity.

Clinton extends baseball deadline

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton's deadline for settling the Major League Baseball strike came and went without agreement.

Residential mediator W.J. Usery did not present his plan for a settlement.

Players filed another unfair labour practice charge with the national labour relations board.

All in all, Monday was not exactly a banner day for the old ball game.

"It's just a few hundred folks trying to figure out how to divide nearly \$2 billion," Clinton said. "They ought to be able to figure that out."

Clinton's deadline of 5 p.m. local time (2000 GMT) for an agreement passed without Usery presenting his terms for a solution. Usery said his recommendations would be ready at 3 p.m. (2000 GMT) Tuesday.

"We simply ran out of time," Usery said. "I refuse to be pessimistic, although it is very difficult to seem to find voluntary agreement between the parties."

No matter what he did, Usery could not persuade players and owners to meet with each other Monday.

They did not speak for the second straight day, even after Clinton ordered them to try to solve the dispute themselves.

Today, according union head Donald Fehr, Usery hoped to give suggestions to both sides about how they might resolve their differences. Later, Usery planned to take his proposal to the president.

Usery met separately with each side after returning from the White House. Though he has been staying up until the early-morning hours for a week while trying to get a deal, Usery turned in well before midnight.

It was uncertain what Clinton would do if the sides rejected Usery's plan. The president could propose special legislation to enact terms of a settlement or binding arbitration, but both types of bills would have to be approved by the House and Senate.

Blazers rout Rockets in fight-marred game



Indiana Pacers Dale Davis (right) and San Antonio Spurs Dennis Rodman (10) reach for a rebound during first half action in Indianapolis. The Pacers, who are 2 games out of the Central Division, led, won 98 to 93 (AFP photo)

play well," said Olajuwon.

The Blazers led by 26 points by halftime and Houston was unable to draw within 20 thereafter. Portland led by as many as 40 points late in the game.

"If they played like that every night, they'd have the best record in the NBA," Olajuwon said. "They moved the ball very well and they passed the ball better than I have seen them. They played very physical. They just played a stiff penalty."

Maxwell, Horry and Smith left memorial coliseum before the game ended and were not available for comment, but Houston's Hakeem Olajuwon said he expects a stiff penalty.

"Everybody's supposed to be a man and a person for your action," Olajuwon said. "So, I don't think it was wise to go into the crowd, and we'll pay the price."

The Blazers, who were involved in a bench-clearing incident with Sacramento last month, were more restrained. Under NBA rules, they had five players suspended for one game for leaving the bench in the earlier melee.

"I guess we learn from our mistakes," said Blazer coach P.J. Carlesimo. "I still don't think the rule's a good one, but at least our guys stayed put and we won't lose anybody for next game."

The fighting obscured Portland's performance on the court.

"The guys off the bench played well, the starters played well, we got good minutes from everybody," Robinson said.

"If we could harness that type of play, we can really make a run in the second half of the season."

Hakeem Olajuwon scored 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for Houston, which had its five-game winning streak snapped. The defending champion Rockets were coming off a 124-100 road rout of the Phoenix Suns, who are tied with Orlando for the best record in the NBA.

"I knew I would have to play a different role tonight, but it's nice being in that position," said Gilliam. "I enjoy when guys look to me to do some scoring. I like that situation."

"They're a better team when their two stars are out," observed Detroit head coach Don Chaney. "They want to prove that they can win with

out them."

Joe Dumars scored 27 points for the Pistons, who had won five of their previous seven games.

The Pistons pulled within 100-97 with 28 seconds left, but that was as close as they got. New Jersey had held a 97-89 lead but Sleepy Floyd missed four free throws in the final minute, allowing Detroit to climb back in.

In Philadelphia, Steve Smith and Mookie Blaylock combined for 25 points in the third quarter as the Atlanta Hawks rallied for a 107-92 victory over the slumping 76ers.

Smith scored 15 of his 22 points and Blaylock had 10 of his 21 in the third period, when Atlanta outscored Philadelphia 32-13.

The Hawks led by at least seven points thereafter and spoiled the ceremonies honouring former 76ers point guard Maurice Cheeks, who had his number retired at halftime.

Dana Barros scored 26 points and Willie Burton added 23 for the Sixers, who blew a 16-point second-quarter lead and lost for the seventh time in nine games.

Suns' Danny Manning out for season

In Phoenix, Arizona, Phoenix Suns forward Danny Manning seriously injured his left knee in practice on Monday and will likely miss the remainder of the season.

Manning is believed to have torn the anterior cruciate ligament of his left knee, team physician Richard

Emerson said. He was to undergo X-rays and a magnetic resonance imaging exam to provide additional information on the injury.

"I'm pretty certain he's lost for the year," said coach Paul Westphal.

The loss is a tremendous blow to the team, since the multi-talented, 2.08 metres, 106 kg Manning, although primarily a forward, is capable of playing all five positions and gives the Suns some much-needed size.

Westphal has called Manning his most valuable player this season. In 46 games, Manning was second on the Suns with average of 17.9 and six rebounds per game.

The Suns 36-10 have the best record in the Western Conference and are tied with the Orlando Magic for the record in the National Basketball Association.

Manning signed a one-year, \$1 million contract, passing up more lucrative offers to play with the Suns and have a chance at an NBA championship.

"My feelings go out to Danny," Suns president Jerry Colangelo said. "He made a tremendous financial sacrifice to come to Phoenix to play this year."

Manning was injured when he collided with teammate Joe Kleine.

RESULTS

Atlanta 107, Philadelphia 92
New Jersey 101, Detroit 97
Portland 120, Houston 92

Sports



America3 crewmembers with Leslie Egnot at the helm, trim the sails after turning a mark during their race against Stars

and Stripes in the America's Cup defenders series off the coast of San Diego (AFP photo)

America's Cup

All boats deliver spectacular racing

SAN DIEGO (R) — Every team on the America's Cup course delivered spectacular racing on Monday as the four winners eked out narrow victories with no margin greater than 54 seconds.

Marc Pajot's France 3, Peter Blake's Team New Zealand, John Bertrand's One Australia and Dennis Conner's Stars Stripes were the winners.

"We're going to have some great races in the America's Cup in the rounds to come," said Peter Lester, tactician on Tag Heuer Challenge.

The most dramatic battle was between Pajot's team and Pedro Campos' Rioja de Espana. Campos, for the first time in the America's Cup trials, competed in a close boat-for-boat battle proving that his boat and crew do have some speed potential.

Campos was obviously ecstatic with the result.

"We broke a runner on the last leg and were unable to gybe to cover our preferred side," he said. "But we're looking forward to round three now the boat is looking

more competitive.

Rioja de Espana won the start, after forcing France 3 over the line, and held the advantage until the two final legs, a fierce tacking and gybing continued throughout the race with France 3 just managing to get ahead and cross the finish line with a mere 22-second advantage.

"It just shows you that you can't make an unforced error and expect a way out," said Harold Cudmore, coach to France 3, on his team's start.

"But Pedro did a very good job and it shows he can be very competitive, we were glad to finally get ahead."

All the other matches were just as closely fought. Team New Zealand's margin of victory over Chris Dickson's Tag Heuer was 54 seconds while One Australia managed to fight off a charge to the finish line by Syd Fischer's Sydney 95 to take the narrowest win of the day at 19 seconds.

Sydney 95 was sailing with a change in the afterguard. Michael Coxon helmed the entire race in the absence of Neville Withey, who has temporarily returned to Australia. Neal McDonald took over as tactician.

Team New Zealand's victory maintained its lead position in the Challenger standings at 14 points, just one point ahead of One Australia.

The Defender course the all-women's team America3 (cubed) skippered by Leslie Egnot pushed hard

against Stars Stripes but could never get past. Conner won by 28 seconds, despite Egnot's gain of nearly half a minute on the run to the finish line.

Stars Stripes heads the Defender standings with 11 points, four ahead of Kevin Mahaney's Young America.



Crewmembers on OneAustralia set a spinnaker after rounding the weather mark in their race against Sydney 95 during the America's Cup Challenger series off the coast of San Diego.

Corretja crashes in Dubai Open

DUBAI (AP) — Spain's Alex Corretja became the first seeded player to crash in the \$1 million Dubai Open, beaten by Sweden's Henrik Holm 4-6, 6-2, 7-5 in tennis action Monday.

Seven of the world's top players battle for supremacy on the hard courts of the Aviation Club for the tournament, which opened Monday and runs through Sunday.

They include the world No. 4 and French Open champion Sergi Bruguera, the top seed, and Wimbledon finalist and world No. 5 Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia, seeded 2.

Saving four of the seven break points in his service game, the 22nd-seeded Holm sped up the match in one hour 51 minutes on the hard court surface, which the eighth-seeded Corretja thought he knew pretty well.

"I could have lost the match," Holm, world No. 67, acknowledged later. "He put a lot of spin in the ball and I'm not too fond of that. But I played aggressive the whole match and stayed calm. That's why I won," he said.

Holm was on the edge from the very first serve. He produced nine double faults and dumped countless volleys into the net. Holm could have won the contest in straight sets. He led 3-1 in the opening set but went on to drop five of his next six games to give the Spaniard, who is world No. 22, the advantage.

Holm took control of the second set and broke to lead 1-1, then 4-1. The Swede had another break at the beginning of the third set.

ISL GRAPHICS/RD2031

QUIZ NIGHT in RAMADAN at Al hanan pub

During the holy month of Ramadan QUIZ NIGHT will be held at Al Hanan Pub on Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m. Katafet and special Ramadan drinks will be served.

Abdul-Jabbar voted into Basketball Hall of Fame

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP) — Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the NBA's all-time leading scorer who played on nine championship teams in college and in the pros, was voted into the Basketball Hall of Fame Monday along with six others.

Also voted into the hall were Women's Olympic and college stars Cheryl Miller and Anne Donovan, former Soviet coach Aleksandr Gomelsky, former NBA official Earl Strom, forward Vern Mikkelsen and coach John Kundla.

Gomelsky, whose '88 team won the Olympic gold medal, was nominated by the international committee.

Known as the father of Soviet men's basketball, Gomelsky compiled a 490-177 record over his 29 years of coaching.

He guided the Soviet national team to seven European championships between 1959 and 1981 and World Championships in 1967 and 1982. His teams also won a silver medal at the 1964 Olympics and bronze medals at the 1968 and 1980 Games.

Mikkelsen was one of the NBA's first power forwards, while Kundla coached Mikkelsen and also let the Minneapolis Lakers to six pro championships in the 1940s and '50s.

"I'm just happy things worked out," Abdul-Jabbar said Monday from an Atlanta hotel after being informed he had been elected. "It hasn't sunk in yet."

"I don't know what to say. It's such a thrill," Kundla said. "We already had five Hall of Famers from the (Minneapolis) Lakers. And now Vern. And me, too."

The first person Kundla called was Mikkelsen. "I was a power forward, before we had a name for it," laughed the 2.01-meter Mikkelsen.

The other Minneapolis Lakers in the hall are George Mikan, Slater Martin, Jim Pollard, Elgin Baylor and Clyde Lovellette. The Minneapolis team kept the nickname Lakers when it moved to Los Angeles in 1960.

"It is, of course, an honour for Kareem to be inducted into the Hall of Fame," said Hall of Famer Jerry West, an executive vice president with the Los Angeles Lakers. "It's also an honour for the hall to have Kareem as a member. He is without a doubt the most consummate professional

I've ever seen and, if not the greatest player of all time, certainly one of two or three greatest."

"Six world championship rings. Six MVP awards. I can't think of anyone, who could be more deserving," Lakers owner Jerry Buss said.

There were also 19 all-star appearances for the NBA's all-time leader in scoring with 44,149 points. He also holds records for games played (1,797) and blocked shots (3,189).

From the time the 2.19-metre Abdul-Jabbar, then known as Lew Alcindor, stepped onto the power Memorial High School court in New York City 1961, through his three NCAA college championships at UCLA and 20 years in the NBA with Milwaukee and Los Angeles, he dominated the game as few men have.

His high school teams lost six games. His college teams were defeated twice. Yet he was ridiculed because of his height.

"He was subjected to things that had been me. I would have really flared up," former UCLA coach John Wooden said. "But he didn't."

And in the tall young man's "intelligence, unselfishness and amazing self-control," Wooden said he found some lessons.

"I learned more from Lewis, as I called him then, than from any other one player I ever had," Wooden said. "I am not talking about basketball now, but about man's humanity to man."

Wooden, who guided UCLA to 10 NCAA titles, called Abdul-Jabbar "the most valuable player the college game has ever had. On or off the court."

Donovan, a 2.03-metre centre, led Old Dominion to the women's national college championship in 1980 and helped boost the U.S. women's Olympic team to gold medals in 1984 and 1988. She is now an assistant coach at Old Dominion.

Miller, also a member of the '84 Olympic, led Southern Cal to the NCAA college championships in '83 and '84 and ranks second only to Hall of famer Carol Blazejowski in scoring. She is now the coach at Southern Cal. Her brother, Reggie, is an all-star guard for the Indiana Pacers.

U.S. athletic footwear makers plan for trade war with China

ATLANTA (AP) — Makers of athletic footwear, one of the main products targeted for U.S. tariffs against China, said Monday they're already planning to shift production elsewhere should efforts to avert a trade war fail.

The shoe manufacturers, in Atlanta for the final day of a big sporting goods trade show, also warned that the sure loser in a trade war would be the U.S. consumer, who would quickly have to pay more for sneakers, cleats and cross-trainers.

There was some uncertainty among exhibitors at the super show over precisely which sporting goods would be affected by the threatened U.S. sanctions, though many felt the \$7.9 billion athletic footwear business, which depends heavily on Chinese imports, was likely to be hit.

"We're not letting all our eggs be in the same basket. If we have to we could shift production to Indonesia, of course not overnight," said Alain Ronc, president of Nashville, Tennessee-based Mitre Sports International, a

leading producer of soccer equipment, including shoes.

Ronc said most U.S. footwear companies rely on China for about half of their production. He said most probably have contingency plans, and there would likely be a rush to increase production at the alternative sites.

Tom Cove, director of government operations for the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, said the proposed tariff was limited to certain specific footwear styles such as women's models and some jogging shoes. That should make it easier for companies to adapt, he said.

Cove said the sporting goods industry in general supports efforts to combat Chinese piracy, the main reason for the proposed tariffs.

John Bobbett, managing director of Champion footwear of Tarrytown, New York, said he doubted many shoe companies were taken unaware by the Clinton administration's weekend threat.

The company is contacting plants in Indonesia, the Philippines and Taiwan to pick up the slack, should production in China become prohibitive, Bobbett said.

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North's jump to four hearts is a little aggressive. However, two aces and five-red trump support is no reason to bid. North does not deserve credit for this action. As for the West hand, we think it is either too strong or not strong enough for the Unusual No Trump convention; therefore, the two diamond overall was probably appropriate.

West led the king of diamonds and, after East's play of the nine, continued with ace, diamond and another. East ruffed the table's jack with the jack of hearts and declarer overruffed. With the spades breaking badly, declarer eventually conceded a trump trick and a club for down one.

The first error, albeit a very sub-

tle one, came at the first trick. Since East had a natural trump trick, there was no need to signal for a diamond continuation. East should have played the lower of the two diamonds to partner for a switch. Since the club shift would be automatic, the contract would go to all intents and purposes, have been down from the start.

The graver error came two tricks

later and it was committed by the declarer. Instead of overruffing the third diamond, South should simply have discarded a club. This play, known as a "no-trick" ruff, would have guaranteed the contract. Declarer can win any return, draw trumps in two rounds and ruff for the rest of the tricks.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAH HINCH
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RATE THE MISSES
Neither vulnerable. South deals.
NORTHERN
♦ 10 ♦
♦ A 9 6 4 3
♦ 3 5 2
♦ A 5 2
WEST
♦ 9 ♦
♦ 9 8 6 5 3
♦ 2
♦ Q J 7
♦ A K 10 8 6 4 9 7
♦ K J 9 8 4
SOUTH
♦ A K 8 4 2
♦ 10 9 5
♦ Q 3

* 7 6

The bidding:

South West North East

2 ♠ 2 ♠ Dbl Pass

2 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♦

Here's an interesting test of your analytical powers. Follow the bidding and play of this deal, then pick out the errors and rank them in order of severity. Note that North's double was negative, for takeout rather than penalties.

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The graver error came two

Brown: U.S. committed to help Palestinian trade, investment

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Declaring that "Gaza is open for business," U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown on Tuesday brought U.S. investors to the autonomous area to meet with their Palestinian counterparts.

"We are bringing together a public-private partnership," Mr. Brown said at the opening of a U.S. government business seminar at a community centre in Gaza City.

Mr. Brown also met with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat at the Palestinian leader's headquarters.

In the meeting, Mr. Arafat committed himself to combating Palestinian militants opposed to making peace with Israel, Mr. Brown said.

The secretary said Mr. Arafat's pledge could help ease the closure that Israel clamped on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in response to the Jan. 22 double bombing in central Israel in which 21 people were killed. The bombers were members of the Islamic Jihad group from Gaza.

Mr. Brown said U.S.-Palestinian economic relations have a way to go. "The chairman (said) a moment ago he was starting from zero. We're starting from zero as well. This is the beginning of a process," Mr. Brown told the news conference.

(Continued on page 7)

Iran wants unconditional talks on island dispute

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iran said Tuesday it was prepared for unconditional talks with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to settle a dispute over three Gulf islands but declined to relinquish its territorial claims.

Tehran Radio, monitored in Cyprus, quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi as criticising the stance taken by eight Arab countries in Cairo with regard to the islands.

The Iranian official said the stance was "one-sided" because it did not reflect Iranian "goodwill" in the dispute.

The foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt and the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council called on Iran Monday to relinquish its occupation of the islands, which are claimed by the UAE.

The ministers said in a statement that they supported UAE sovereignty over the islands and urged Iran to accept the emirates' proposal to refer the dispute to the World Court.

Syrian endorsement of the statement came as a surprise. It is one of Iran's main Arab allies.

Iran has rejected World Court arbitration over the islands, insisting on direct talks.

"On the basis of goodwill and good neighbourliness Iran welcomes the continuation of bilateral talks in order

At the seminar, 10 U.S. business people and 15 Palestinian economists and entrepreneurs explored possible joint ventures and private investment in the financially strapped Gaza Strip.

Mr. Brown said Washington was keen to help improve living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and wanted to include the Palestinian self-rule authority in its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP).

"I indicated to Chairman Arafat that he has the commitment of President Clinton on this matter," Mr. Brown told the joint news conference with Mr. Arafat in Gaza.

"We are taking formal administrative steps that will certainly help matters of commerce and trade. It will help in the creation of jobs."

The White House announced last week that Mr. Clinton had ended the GSP programme for Israel. The programme offers duty-free treatment to specified products sold in the United States. It is primarily aimed at helping developing countries.

Palestinian officials said they have been negotiating with Washington to be included in the GSP and expect to be granted the status by April.

Ziad Karam, a member of Mr. Brown's delegation, announced at the seminar,

pleased by the U.S. assurances on trade.

"This visit is a clear signal from His Excellency President Clinton and Mr. Brown of the support of the American administration to the Palestinians," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Brown announced the launching of two projects established or being planned by U.S. companies from a group of Arab-American and Jewish-American businessmen eager to invest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Arafat told the Americans that the Palestinians badly needed help to build their infrastructure.

"We are sure this coordination and cooperation can do a lot for our people, for the peace process and for our children," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Brown has called for private investment in the Palestinian self-rule areas in the past. However, U.S. officials travelling with the secretary said that since autonomy began last May, only one private U.S.-Palestinian venture was formed, a factory making building materials in the Gaza Strip.

The U.S. government offers private investors loan guarantees and political risk insurance as incentives, the officials said.

Ziad Karam, a member of Mr. Brown's delegation, announced at the seminar,

plans to build a hotel in Gaza.

Mr. Brown said economic stability was a condition for the success of the peace process. "We also know that the peace process brings high expectations among the people... and we want to do everything we can to help in that change."

Addressing the seminar, he said: "We are here today on serious business. We want to declare publicly, with you, that Gaza is open for business."

There has been no visible improvement in Gaza's economy since Mr. Arafat took control in July, with unemployment hovering around 50 per cent. The situation deteriorated further after Israel sealed the Strip, keeping tens of thousands of Palestinians from their jobs in Israel.

Mr. Brown's stopover in Gaza is part of a week-long Middle East tour promoting U.S. trade and investment in the region.

Palestinians, seeking greater access to world markets, will push for a preferential trade pact with Washington at a meeting in Taba, Egypt, on Tuesday of trade ministers from the United States, Israel and Arab peace partners.

"Palestinian products have not been admitted to the United States before under a Palestinian label," chief

(Continued on page 7)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanon wants Italy to take back waste

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's parliament wants Italy to take back thousands of barrels of toxic waste dumped in the middle eastern country during its 1975-90 civil war, the head of a parliamentary committee said. Hageg Jokhadarian, head of the parliamentary environment committee, told reporters after a late-night session on Monday that Italy should pay the cost of taking back the waste sent to Lebanon in 1987-88. He said the committee was asking the government to ask Italy to take back the waste at its own expense. The government ordered a high-level inquiry last week after Greenpeace, the international watchdog, said the 10,000 barrels of waste were "ecological time bombs" and offered to help get Italy to take them back. Mr. Jokhadarian said a secret Lebanese army investigation in 1988 concluded that 1,500 barrels were buried in Lebanon and the rest were dumped in the sea or destroyed.

Israel opens police station in Gaza

NEVE DEKALIM, The Gaza Strip (AFP) — Police Minister Moshe Shahal opened the first border police station in a Jewish settlement on the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, in a bid to improve security. The Neve Dekalim station, manned by 78 officers, will serve the bloc of colonies in the south of the Strip where most of the 5,000 Gaza settlers live. "This station is part of our new operation in the Gaza Strip," said police spokesman Eric Bar Chen, following the launch of an autonomous zone in the territory last May. He said 370 policemen maintain order in the Israeli-held areas of Gaza. Mr. Shahal underlined his support for total separation between Israelis and Palestinians.

Haq says militants could be crucified

CAIRO (R) — One of Islam's leading religious scholars has said Egypt's Muslim militants qualify for the severest Islamic penalty including crucifixion and amputation. Gad Al Haq Ali Gad Al Haq, the sheikh of Al Azhar, said in the Nile Valley town of Beni Suef that militants did not deserve to be called "religious extremists," let alone "Islamic groups" — the title the militants use themselves. "They are just criminals because Islam does not recognise murder, violence or upsetting stability," he added. He was quoted in the government newspaper Al Gomhouria on Tuesday. The sheikh said the militants, whose hallmark is killing policemen, qualified for what Islamic law calls "hadd al barab," the penalty reserved for those "who fight God and his prophet and spread corruption on earth." Citing the Koranic verse on the subject, he said: "They should be killed, or crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off... or be expelled from the earth. That is their punishment in this world and they will have a great torture in the next."

Mobile telephones banned from Knesset

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli members of parliament have been banned from using mobile telephones during full session after complaints from Speaker Shevah Meis about disruption from the constant ringing. "It is unfortunate that the representatives of the people take personal calls during debates and whisper into their phones like stage prompters," Mr. Weiss told the Knesset affairs committee which voted out portables on Monday. Deputies will still be able to stay in touch during committee meetings, although they were asked to keep calls to a minimum.

Russian envoy, Sharash holds talks

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharash discussed the Middle East peace process with a senior Russian envoy here Tuesday. The official news agency SANA said Mr. Sharash's talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posavayuk also covered bilateral relations. Syria is the first leg of a Middle East tour by Mr. Posavayuk which will also take in Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the occupied territories. Diplomats said Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev would embark on a Middle East tour in March.

Kuwait MPs say Israel bombing heroic act

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaitis approve of a Palestinian suicide bombing that killed 21 Israelis and oppose their government's condemnation of the attack, members of parliament (MPs) said on Tuesday. "That was a heroic act against an aggressive occupier," MP Adnan Abdul Samad said in an interview. MP and former Trade and Industry Minister Abdulla Al Hajeri suggested Kuwait's condemnation of the Jan. 22 attack was the result of U.S. diplomatic pressure. "The statement issued by the government I regard as a black spot in the history of Kuwait," Mr. Hajeri told Reuters, echoing a common view among MPs gathered for parliament's weekly session. "That statement stirred popular resentment."

EU deal looks closer for Turkey, good for Cyprus

ANKARA (R) — Customs union with Europe, a goal that has eluded Turkey for decades, seems within its grasp and developments may help end a dispute with Greece over the division of Cyprus, analysts said on Tuesday.

European Union (EU) foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels on Monday, agreed in principle on customs union with Ankara. The deal must still be approved by the Joint Association Council, to meet on March 6-7.

An apparent counter-weight for the removal of a standing Greek veto on Turkey's rapprochement with the EU, the ministers also agreed to begin membership negotiations with Cyprus after 1996.

"Sufficient time has been given before launching talks with Cyprus. This leaves Turkey's options open. It is not as if the EU will start talks with Cyprus tomorrow," said Seyfi Tashan, chairman of the independent Foreign Policy Institute.

"Greece may still put up obstacles before March but the customs union looks set to happen," he told Reuters.

Turkey, an associate member since 1963, agreed with the European Community in 1973 on a 22-year transition period to enter customs union. Its 1987 bid for full membership however, has been shelved by tacit mutual agreement.

Prominent Turkish columnist: 'We must study it before reacting'

Prominent Turkish columnist Mehmet Ali Birand said Ankara should stand to gain in Cyprus as well.

"Turkey has openly warned the EU that if they only take the Greek Cypriot side, they will be responsible for the effective partition of the island," he wrote in Sabah daily.

"One way or other, a solution to the Cyprus problem is drawing closer," he said.

Ankara and Mr. Denktash back Cyprus's accession to the EU but say it should only happen after the two rival communities are united in a federal state — a goal that has eluded all efforts by the United Nations and others for two decades.

Mr. Birand, trying to calm a rift with Algeria's military rulers, said Tuesday that Paris had always favoured a dialogue to end the country's civil war, but that it was up to the Algerians to organise it.

Mr. Juppe was speaking after a meeting on Algeria with Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, Interior Minister Charles Pasqua and Defence Minister Francois Leotard following President Francois Mitterrand's call last Friday for European Union ministers to convene a conference on the Islamic insurrection in Algeria.

Mr. Pasqua for his part said the premier's office would issue a clarification later on Tuesday, but Mr. Juppe implied this would not be necessary.

"The clarification was already made yesterday by Mr. Pasqua and myself.



HIGHER COMMITTEE MEETS: His Royal committee for peace negotiations (see page one) Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Tuesday (Petra photo) chairs a meeting of the Higher Steering Committee.



Suicide rate soaring in Estonia

GOTHENBURG, Sweden (AFP) — The suicide rate in Estonia has doubled in five years to reach the highest level in Europe, an Estonian doctor told a medical conference Monday. Arno Adamsoo of Tartu University blamed the increase on growing alcoholism and intense pressure to succeed in the new market economy following the Baltic republic's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. From 1988 to 1993, the suicide rate jumped from 40 to 80 cases per 100,000 people, and the other two Baltic republics, Latvia and Lithuania, have witnessed similar increases, Mr. Adamsoo said. In the 1980s, he said, the Estonian government waged a programme against alcoholism and Estonians "were hopeful because liberation from the Soviet system seemed near." But now, both alcoholism and social pressures are on the rise. Mr. Adamsoo said Estonia's market economy has meant "a faster work pace for entrepreneurs and businessmen, people who don't think about their health."

Japan approves gene therapy for first time

TOKYO (AFP) — The Japanese government has given its approval for the first time to controversial gene therapy, as part of treatment for a four-year-old boy suffering from immune deficiency. But Health Minister Shioichi Ide urged doctors Tuesday to adopt a cautious approach, taking ethical considerations into account. Mr. Ide told a news conference that it was hoped the treatment would lead to "a major breakthrough." His ministry gave its approval for the gene therapy Monday. It will involve extracting lymphocytes from the boy, mixing them with normal adenosine deaminase (ADA) genes, before re-injecting them in the hope that a normal immune system will develop. The boy was born lacking ADA. Even a common cold could prove fatal to him. Mr. Ide said he recognised the need to promote advanced medical technology but hoped doctors would exercise extreme caution. Hokkaido University Hospital is expected to begin the therapy on the boy next month.

Sikhs to donate gold to beautify shrine

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — Indian Sikhs living in Britain will donate 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds) of gold to beautify their faith's holiest shrine — the Golden Temple in the Punjab city of Amritsar, news reports said Tuesday. The temple was the centre of a Sikh separatist campaign for a homeland and the scene of a fierce battle between Indian troops and entrenched Sikh militants in 1984. Later that year, two Sikh bodyguards assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for ordering troops into the shrine. Sikhs living in Britain felt the urge to replace the worn out gold plating that does the temple top, the Indian Express newspaper reported. It will cost an estimated 50 million rupees (\$1.6 million) to buy the gold and put it on the dome. The gold plating of the temple was first done by Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early 18th century. Since then the gold has not been replaced.

World's tallest building proposed for Melbourne

MELBOURNE (R) — A proposal by an Australian company to build the world's tallest office building in Melbourne — a city with 24 per cent office vacancy — won support from the Victoria state government Monday. Victoria's deputy premier, Pat McNamara, said the proposal by the Grollo Construction Group to build the 500-metre (1,640 ft) building reflected a "new spirit of enthusiasm" in the state, which was hit badly by Australia's recent economic recession. The construction group's chief executive, Bruno Grollo, said Sunday he wanted to build a three-sided gold tower, representing the sun and the moon and the planets and stars.